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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [MASS](#) [MARR](#) [EZ](#) [RU](#)  
SUBJECT: CZECH-RUSSIAN PRESIDENTIAL MEETINGS CORDIAL; NO  
NEW ARGUMENTS ON MISSILE DEFENSE

REF: IIR 6 824 0072 07

Classified By: Political-Economic Counselor Mike Dodman  
for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary. The visit of President Klaus with President Putin in Moscow was cordial and productive. Although press reports focused on the missile defense aspect of the visit, only about 10 per cent of the discussions in meetings concerned the issue. President Putin, who has been passionate in public statements opposing the radar base in the Czech Republic, was calm and polite when he discussed the issue with President Klaus. The arguments posed by the Russians are not new: (1) the Middle East and Iran will not pose a threat of missile attack for decades, (2) the Czech Republic is not a logical site for a MD base directed at Iran, and (3) the MD system is therefore directed at Russia, and will be destabilizing. (Post will email Czech memcons of these meetings to EUR/NCE.) The Czechs and Russians agreed to have detailed consultations on MD in Moscow in July. (Deputy Foreign Minister Tomas Pojar, Deputy Minister of Defense Martin Bartak, and Chief of General Staff Lt. Gen. Vlastimil Picek will likely represent the Czech Republic.) Pojar has requested further briefings with U.S. experts on the technology and history of MD, to prepare the Czech delegation for the consultations in Moscow. End summary.

¶2. (SBU) DCM met with Deputy Foreign Minister Tomas Pojar May 2 to discuss President Klaus's meetings in Moscow on April

¶27. DCM and Poloff later attended an official briefing for EU Ambassadors and the U.S., also given by Pojar.

¶3. (SBU) President Klaus's visit to the Russian Federation is the first for a Czech President. In honor of the historic occasion, the delegation was large, and included the Deputy Speakers of the House and Senate of the Czech Parliament, the Deputy Ministers of the MFA, MOD, and Ministry of Trade and Industry, and ninety representatives of Czech businesses. There were four official meetings: President Klaus met with President Putin, the Presidents met with members of the Duma, the delegation on both sides met in a plenary session, and Pojar had a working session with his counterparts.

¶4. (C) Pojar said the meetings were cordial and productive. The Russians went to great length to distinguish bilateral relations (thriving, especially economically), and the issue of missile defense (a separate matter, which the Russians said should not affect bilateral relations). Although press coverage of the visit focused primarily on missile defense, Pojar said only 10 per cent of the discussions concerned the issue, and missile defense was not discussed at all in the plenary session. (Note: Pojar gave the DCM Czech memcons of

the visit, which we will email to EUR/NCE as soon as they are translated.)

15. (C) Pojar noted that the Russian officials who raised MD at the different meetings did so using identical talking points. He said nothing was raised that has not previously been heard in Oslo, Berlin and other venues. In summary, the Russians raised the following points: (1) The Middle East and/or Iran will not pose a threat of missile attack for decades. The Russians believe nuclear proliferation and sale of nuclear materials to terrorists pose a greater threat in the near term; (2) Czech Republic is too far from Iran to be a logical choice for a MD base; and therefore, (3) MD is directed against Russia, not the Middle East, (just as, they argued, the MD site in Alaska is actually directed at China, not North Korea). The Russians expressed concern that the purpose of President Bush's June visit to Prague is to sign an agreement on MD. Pojar said the Czechs reassured the Russians that is not the case.

16. (C) In the private briefing with DCM, Pojar said the Russians also argued that even if MD is defensive, it is "part of the U.S.'s strategic nuclear arsenal" and therefore destabilizing.

17. (C) In response to the concerns raised by the Russians, Pojar proposed further consultations. The parties agreed that teams from each country will participate in detailed consultations for 2-3 days in Moscow in July. Pojar, Deputy Minister of Defense Martin Bartak, and Chief of General Staff Lt. Gen. Vlastimil Picek will represent the Czech Republic. (In his meeting with DCM, Pojar requested consultations with U.S. experts prior to the consultations in Russia. In addition to technical information, the Czechs want a briefing on the history of MD to better counter factual inaccuracies

asserted by the Russians.)

18. (C) For the Czechs, the goal of the consultations with Russia is to fully explain Czech views, and better understand the "real" reasons for Russian opposition to MD (as opposed to stated objections). Pojar shared possible reasons underlying Russia's objections: (1) hostility towards the U.S. is for domestic consumption, as it will play well in advance of the national and presidential elections, (2) to undermine transatlantic relations, and to foment divisions within the EU, (3) nostalgia: the Czechs think the Russian military is applying Soviet-era thought patterns to new challenges involving a former Warsaw-Pact partner.

19. (SBU) The other 90 per cent of the meetings during the Klaus visit addressed primarily economic matters. The two presidents signed seven agreements worth 40 billion Czech Crowns (nearly \$2 billion), including important agreements concerning dual taxation, IPR protection of military equipment, and modernization of Russian helicopters (reftel). Kosovo and the current violence in Estonia were not raised.  
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